

*Oral Questions*

• (1130)

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

## CHANGE IN REGULATIONS—REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Yesterday the Conservative Member for Annapolis Valley—Hants said what we in opposition have been saying for months, that is, the recent cuts in unemployment insurance are wrong, unfair, unjust, bad, and have to be changed. He said that if there were a vote in the Conservative caucus they would be changed. If the Minister will not listen to veterans and pensioners, will she at least listen to members of her own caucus and the Conservative women of Oromocto, and withdraw this cruel measure while the Forget Commission is sitting?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, this issue has been raised on a number of occasions in the House of Commons. I have made responses at those times. The Government has made a response as well. The question was debated at length this morning in the Standing Committee. As for comments with regard to the caucus, I would say that what goes on in caucus is a matter for members of caucus.

**Mr. Orlikow:** It's what he said in public, not what he said in caucus.

**Miss MacDonald:** The Hon. Member must be somewhat concerned about caucus when he listens to the Hon. Member for York South—Weston.

## CONSERVATIVE CAUCUS INQUIRY

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister saying that this large Conservative caucus of 211 Members not only has no impact on bad legislation in the House of Commons but that it has no impact behind the closed doors of caucus? Is that what she is saying about this large caucus?

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, what I consider—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I must rule the question out of order.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

**CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

## PRICE OF GASOLINE—SHELL COMPANY'S PROFITS

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who has the responsibility of trying to protect the

consumers of Canada. The Executive Vice-President of Shell Canada confirmed Wednesday that his company is padding profit margins by 2 cents to 3 cents per litre of gasoline. Yet the Government is asking the oil companies to pass on the savings from reduced crude oil costs. How is this voluntary policy effective when the Shell Canada slogan "Shell helps" really means "Shell helps itself"?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post):** In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, our Government's energy policy has already paid handsome dividends, and consumers are now benefitting from lower market prices. Hopefully the situation will continue to be favourable to consumers, and I can assure my colleague that we will monitor developments very closely.

[*English*]

## PETRO-CANADA—INCREASE IN TORONTO GASOLINE PRICE

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, if the Government is monitoring the situation can the Minister explain why the Government owned oil company, Petro-Canada, is now following the Shell pricing policy by raising its price today in Toronto to more than 40 cents per litre when it should be 38 cents per litre? Will the Government direct, or at least urge, Petro-Canada to pass on the full 12 cent per litre saving to the consumer?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post):** Mr. Speaker, I am rather surprised to hear such comments, if only because last year the Hon. Member's Party urged the Government to adopt a hands-off policy and let the marketplace set prices; yet now that prices are falling they want us to set a floor price.

The only thing we have to be concerned about, Mr. Speaker, is that consumers should reap the full benefits of declining oil prices, and that is what the Government is monitoring on a regular basis.

\* \* \*

**RAILWAYS**

## POSSIBLE LAY-OFF OF CN WORKERS AT JONQUIÈRE, P.Q.

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackbrun (Jonquière):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Minister of Transport.

Within the next few weeks, 15 CN workers in Jonquière could be laid off following the manpower rationalization announced by the CN. The loss of 15 jobs in remote areas is equivalent to a loss of 200 jobs in Montreal.

Can the Minister give me the assurance that the meeting which I have requested between officials from his Department, the CN authorities and representatives of the 15 employees in Jonquière who could lose their job will be held as soon as